MODERN TIMES

New Haven 20¢

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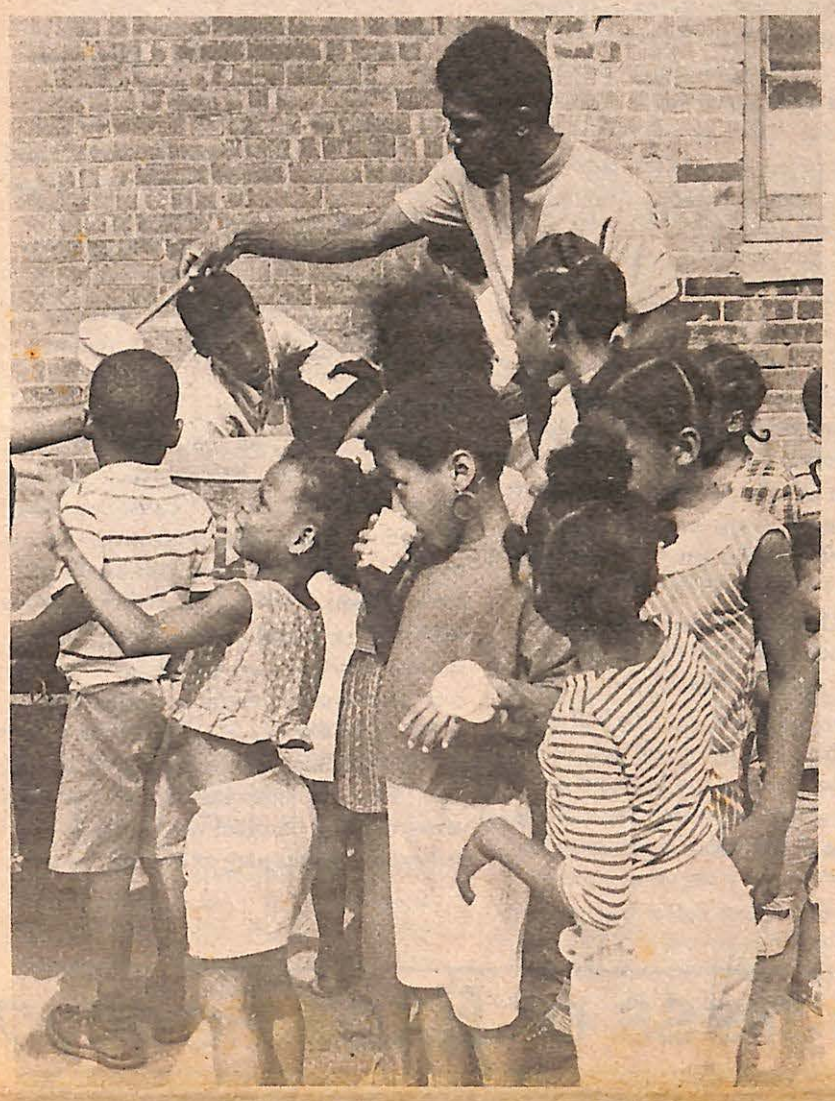
HILL LEADER DIES TRAGICALLY



Richard Balzer

Willie Smith serving lemonade in 1972 at the Hill Parents Association (HPA) tot-lot on Congress Avenue.

by Liz Henderson
Modern Times Staff

Sometime after midnight on August 14, an angry teenager turned his knife against the man who was trying to stop him from using it on another teenager. That man was Willie Smith. Smith died, victim of the violent frustration that so many young black people feel in this city and that Smith himself had shared. There is a terrible irony in his death, for he had spent the last 10 years of his life working to direct that anger into action for community change.

Early Community Action

Willie Smith first joined in community action with the Hill Parents Association (HPA) in 1966-67. The HPA day camp and tot-lot were among the projects he worked on. Then he took a job with the Hill Neighborhood Corporation (HNC) where he eventually served as assistant executive director. He resigned in the spring of 1973. Over the past summer, he worked out of the Model Cities office downtown coordinating the summer employment program for high school students.

Outside his job he helped to set up once again the old HPA tot-lot on Congress Avenue.

Center of Violent Controversy

Many times during Smith's years of work in the Hill he was at the center of violent controversies over how change could best be made. In recent years some Hill residents accused Smith of being Vernon Moore's (Model Cities Director) 'man in the Hill' and of getting too cosy with Downtown. Whatever his partisan leanings, Smith remained one of the most dedicated community workers in New Haven. He never gave up, despite recent hard times and fund cutbacks--and may well have held the record for hours spent in the endless meetings required to get anything done.

Burrell Billingslea, in charge of planning for citizen participation at HNC, rembers working with Smith as an exciting experience: "I learned a tremendous amount about organizing from him. Willie felt comfortable with all kinds of different people---cats out on the street or a big wheel like Mayor Guida---his funeral showed that. At meetings we would try to pull each other's coat and say 'Hey man, you get mad too easily,' but in the end he was telling me that more than I was telling him. While we were working together there was this feeling that we were really doing something."

Local 217 Launches Organizing Drive

by Modern Times Staff

A major, new organizing drive has just been announced by the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union, AFL-CIO. New Haven-based Local 217 will conduct the drive aimed at hotel, motel and food service workers in Connecticut. Local 217 has added 4 new organizers and extra office workers to its staff for what the union's leadership calls "the most aggressive organising drive Connecticut has seen in many years in any industry."

The 500,000-member Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Union has an energetic, young new President, 41-year old Edward T. Hanley of Chicago. The International has vowee vowed to pour enough organising resources into the state to rapidly double or triple the International's 3,000 Connecticut members.

Local 217 Secretary-Treasurer John Wilhelm says that "service workers in general, and food and hotel workers in particular, are ready, willing and anxious to organize. Conditions in non-union operations in our industry are bad, real bad. Wages are terrible, fringe benefits that many other workers take for granted just don't exist, and working conditions are a disaster in many places."

Wilhelm said that "with enough money and backing from our new International Union leadership, we are finally going to have the resources and the strength to back up workers in our industry who are ready to stand up to their bosses." The union said it is especially aiming to "send a message" to the major chains which are more and more dominating its industry: Holiday Inn, Howard Johnson, Ramada, and the other giants.

Last fall, following a bitter 7-week strike, Local 217 organized the Holiday Inn of Norwalk, Connecticut, the first Holiday Inn to be unionized in this state and only the second in New England. The contract negotiated there was excellent, the union says, and it plans to use it to build a strong base among workers in the big chains.

According to Wilhelm, "the chains are making all the profit. The small independent operators who used to be typical are dying out because of the competition from the giants. We are especially going after the chains because they are making their profits by really putting it to the workers. Instead of letting the workers share in their big financial successes, they are laughing all the way to the bank because they think their employees are either too stupid or too weak to unionise."

"Won't be exploited any more"

"In Connecticut," Wilhelm concluded, "we're going to show these companies they're wrong. With the help of a strong Union, these bosses

see Local 217, page 7

Migrant Group Wins Representation

META

A march in front of the Department of Migrant Labor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in Hartford was held recently. Pickets marched in solidarity with the A.T.A. delegation in Puerto Rico. See story on page2.

What's Inside

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AND MUCH MORE - - -

META Helps Migrant Workers Gain Rights

by Modern Times Staff

At long last, the Puerto Rican migrant workers who labor in the tobacco fields of Connecticut have won some important gains in their labor contracts for the coming year. Picking tobacco for the Shade Tobacco Growers Association and living in labor camps run by the Association in the Connecticut Valley, the migrant workers had to fight hard to form their new organisation, the Agricultural Workers Association (ATA).

ATA President Juan Irizarry and six other migrant workers' representatives went recently to Puerto Rico for meetings with the Department of Labor and the Governor's Office. The Secretary of Labor in Puerto Rico has given the ATA the assurance that they will be able to participate in migrant workers' contract negotiations for the coming tobacco season. Furthermore, in a September 5 meeting with Mr. Irizarry, Anthony Amenta, Director of the Shade Tobacco Growers Association, indicated that he would abide by the Labor Department's decision. This is a major breakthrough in the opnion of ATA since up until now the migrant tobacco workers have had virtually no power to influence their own working conditions.

Growers Dominate Psychologically

Until recently, migrant workers have been living and working in an atmosphere completely controlled by the growers. Mr. Irizarry finds this psychological domination particularly objectionable: "The press is always trying to see the physical condition. I don't say that the physical condition is so bad. It is the condition of the workers themselves, the psychological conditions -- to be 3,4,5,or 6 months inside a camp without transportation everyday to a city to get contact with other human beings." Even when the workers do manage to get to the city on their own and at their own expense, they often find that the public looks upon them as unwanted outsiders, and nothing more.

During our September 5 interview, Mr. Irizarry raised a number of other specific problems which the Puerto Rican workers are encountering with the growers. Although the contracts guarantee the workers 120 hours work every three weeks, often this guarantee is never received. Therefore, it is often the case that workers come up from Puerto Rico at the mercy of the growers and do not find the expected amount of work—and income—awaiting them. Furthermore, Mr. Irizarry finds medical care inadequate although the migrant workers are required to pay 55 cents per week to receive it.

Organization Effort

Mr. Irizarry comes from a background of industrial union organization with Puerto Rico's powerful national union, the M.O.U. (Movimiento Obrero Unito). He then began to take an interest in migrant workers who go far from their homes and culture to work in deplorable conditions with no organization working to protect their most basic rights. He himself first went to the continental United States to work in the asparagus fields of Green Giant, Delaware. There he was fined for his attempts to organize his fellow workers: "They said I was supposed to work and not organize." Later Mr. Irizarry's interest focused on the tobacco workers in the Connecticut Valley.

META, a religious organization which supports the rights of migrant workers, has recently taken an active interest in the situation in the tobacco camps. On July 18, Rev. Wilfredo Valez and Mr. Irizarry were arrested for criminal trespassing in their efforts to organize the workers. After the incident, the organization ATA was formed Through ATA's own affirmative legal action, a court order has been issued granting them accessibility to the camps from 9:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. with the right to use facilities such as the dining hall and chapel. This court order will remain in force until a full trial can be heard with Mr. Irizarry, Rev. Velez and Sister Betsy Flynn (also of META) together with six other migrant workers arguing that they should be given a definitive ruling affirming ATA's right to organize workers in the tobacco camps. Director Amenta has already presented counter-arguments before the court, and the full trial is scheduled to begin this month in New Haven Federal Court before Judge Zampano.

Support from M.O.U.

ATA's principal financial support has been from the churches contributing to META and from a $200 per month contribution by the United Farm Workers. However, ATA's affiliation and source of negotating strength lies with the M.O.U. in Puerto Rico. Of course, ATA's real power depends on its membership. Although the tobacco workers feel under strong indirect pressure not to join ATA, the organization already has an estimated 600 members.

In spite of the fact that the current tobacco season is now ending, crucial days still lie ahead for the tobacco workers. In the coming weeks ATA will actively pursue its court case in New Haven under counsel David Sheehan. And in the coming months ATA will try to make good on the Puerto Rican Labor Secretary's promise to allow it to participate in contract negotiations. These negotiations will be held in New York during November and December. ATA will then follow the negotiations to Puerto Rico where the final contract will be drawn up in January or February of the coming year.

Open Line

Nixon Vetoes Minimum Wage Bill

by Dick Enmale

You've got to hand it to old President Nixon. He sure doesn't cut and run from a tough fight. There he was last week, telling it like it was, telling us how he had to veto the law raising the legal minimum wase. "It's inflationary; it's irresponsible." That's how he summed it up.

Now that takes guts. The Watergate mess has Nixon looking bad, real bad. All that news about $10 million tax dollars spent on his California and Florida mansions has had folks using pretty strong language. Then the news about how the Cambodia bombing was kept secret from the public and from Congress got people worked up. Then the Agnew thing.

Workers Bear Burden

You might think Nixon would be taking it on the chin, lying low, eating crow, soft-pedaling his hard line on working folk and the poor. But Nixon's tough. He had 'em fooled. He hasn't changed. He is going to cut the inflation by keeping down those Americans earning $1.60 per hour (the minimum wage to day) which works out to $3,328 per year (with no vacations). That, my friends, is below the annual wage of $3,500 which the Department of Labor calls "the poverty line."

You might think Nixon these days would have a hard time selling people the ideas that keeping poor people poor is a good way to stop prices from rising. You might think that, but you would be wrong, dead wrong. Because while Nixon is looking and feeling bad, so too do one hell of a lot of working Americans.

What's most frightening about life in these United States nowadays is not the line the President dishes out. No, the bad news is the fact that many, many people are buying that line. Or at least they are too wrapped up in their jobs and families and little pleasures to give much of a damn. Too bad. Because if Nixon can go ahead and patch up this country's shakey economy by squeezing low and middle income working people, those people are going to find their jobs gone, their families in distress and their little pleasures spoiled.

The way I read American history, in the good old days, guys like Nixon got laughed at and tarred-and feathered and run out of town for doing a lot less than Nixon's done. Yet he goes on, the joke about the reverse Robin Hood come to life; he takes from the poor to give to the rich.

I have to admit that I really just about fell off my chair when I heard Nixon explain that he had to veto the minimum wage law in order to save jobs of a lot of teenagers. That's a good one. Nixon says that if teenagers and others had to get paid more than $1.60 per hour, businessmen wouldn't hire them. So if the law were somehow passed, we'd all begin to see the McDonalds and Howard Johnsons and lots of other places where workers earn minimum wages just closing down all over the place. That's what Nixon says. That's what the executives of those companies say. (Notice how they say the same things? Well, it's just coincidence.

That might scare you, except if you thought about it one minute. The minimum wage has been raised many times over the years (although not since 1966). Each time the executives predicted rack and ruin if minimum wages went up, because then they wouldn't hire workers anymore and maybe have to close down. Well, have you seen a lot of McDonalds and HoJo's closing down over the years? No? Well, isn't that interesting.

Maybe the executives are lying. Maybe ..., but no, that't not possible. The President and his advisors are all honorable men.

Progress or Expediency?

L. M. F.

This is the new New Haven Railroad Terminal, not much of an improvement, if any, from the old. At least the old terminal had lots of space and some good old nineteenth-century charm; the only distinction that this one has, unfortunately, are paid toilets and plastic benches.

Dates for Making New Voters

All sessions will be held in the Hearing Room, Hall of Records, 200 Orange St

Saturday	Sept 29	9 am to 1 pm
Monday	Oct 1	12 noon to 8 pm
Tuesday	Oct 2	12 noon to 8 pm
Wednesday	Oct 3	12 noon to 8 pm
Thursday	Oct 4	12 noon to 9 pm
Friday	Oct 5	12 noon to 9 pm
Saturday	Oct 6	12 noon to 8 pm
Saturday (LAST DAY)	Oct 13	9 am to 8 pm
Monday (ONLY FOR THOSE WHOSE RIGHTS MATURE)	Nov 6*	12 noon to 3 pm
Thursday	Dec 13	7 pm to 9 pm

Also--any day Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm at the Registrar of Voters and The Town Clerk's Office, 2nd floor, 200 Orange Street.

There is no more enrollment in a party before this fall's election or primaries except for someone registering to vote for the first time.

*"Rights mature" means becoming 18 or a citizen only.

For more information: League of Women Voters Service Information 562-7233

A Modest Proposal

by Rick Wolff
Modern Times Staff

Here are some economic questions for Democrat Guida and Republican Esposito as the mayoral campaign warms up.

1. What are you going to do about food prices?

How about having the city buy huge quantities of food at low prices? Then the city could resell them to city residents, passing on the savings. And no tax dollars would have to be used to pay for the costs of buying, handling, storing the food, etc., because the city could raise that money by just charging us slightly higher prices than the city itself paid. The city's prices would still be way below store prices for the simple reason that the city won't be making a profit on what it sells, while the stores always do.

The big supermarkets will, of course, yell like hell about a plan that confronts them with low-cost competition. The smaller, neighborhood stores would not be hurt much since most people don't do their bulk buying of food there; they usually go to the supermarkets for that.

If you are thinking about the workers who might lose jobs in the supermarkets if people shift to the city stores, we can solve that problem by making sure that the city hires for its stores the people laid off from the supermarkets.

New Haven consumers save money on food, New Haven jobs are protected and the only losers are the supermarket owners. And almost none of them live in New Haven. What is the responsibility of New Haven's mayor in this situation? What about this plan? Let's have some answers. If not this plan, does any candidate have anything better -- or will the candidate for Mayor say nothing and do nothing?

2. What are you going to do about the fuel oil shortage this winter?

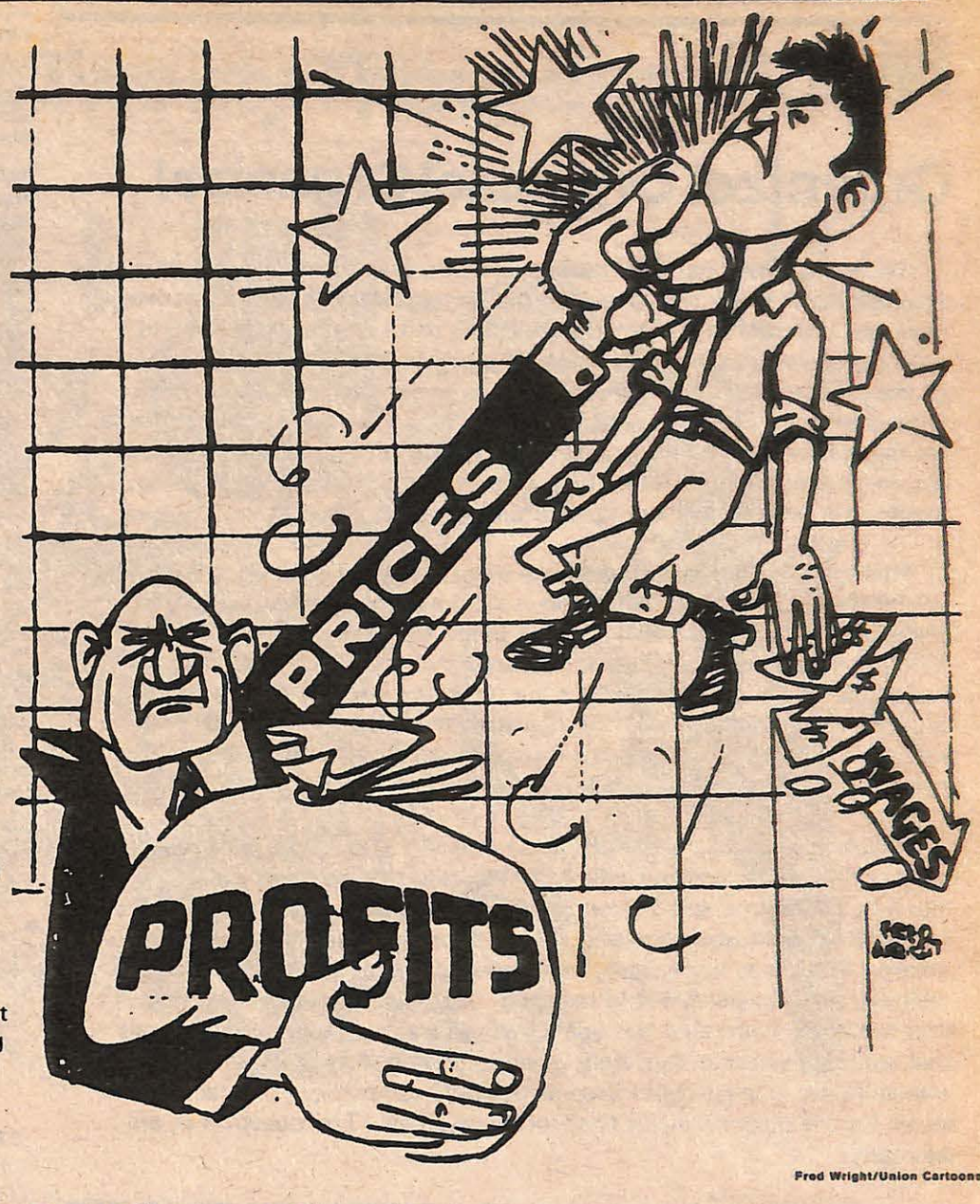
What plan do you have to deal with shortages if they occur? Is the city buying oil to see New Haveners through the winter? Has the Mayor set up a plan that distributes scarce oil to the New Haveners who will need it most? Or will the candidates say nothing and do nothing, leaving city residents to the profit-minded mercies of the oil companies?

3. What are you going to do about jobs for New Haveners?

The newspapers are full of stories about a recession coming in late 1973 and lasting through 1974. The sky-high interest rates these days usually slow down all kinds of construction of homes and buildings. Inflation means people buy less, so private businesses produce less and employ fewer workers. Everything, in a word, points to growing unemployment. What are the candidates going to do about it?

How about a plan to put laid-off workers on city payrolls improving city parks and playgrounds, helping out in the schools, etc.? How about the city taking the new step of setting up an employment bureau designed to find jobs as near New Haven as possible for any New Havener looking for one in the months ahead? How about the city now studying which jobs are most likely to be lost and informing the workers concerned in advance to assist them in planning for the future? How about some nice, friendly pressure on New Haven-based employers to hire New Haveners?

How about some serious plans and proposals and answers on these key economic issues for New Haven? Or will the candidates say little and do less?



Fred Wright/Union Cartoons

AFT Convention Ponders Future of Organized Teachers

by Stan Heller
Modern Times Staff

It was a great triumph for Albert Shanker. He was given a free hand to negotiate a merger with the National Education Association (NEA). His stress on electing friendly politicians was strongly approved. His opponents were few and divided. And his chief rival didn't even put up a fight. So he seems destined to create and control a gigantic new teachers organization. But what kind of organization will it be?

Will it be the biggest trade union in the country, or just a massive political pressure group? That's what one wonders about after looking at the results of last month's convention of the American Federation of Teachers.

Shanker Dominates Convention

Shanker's control of the convention was impressive. As chief engineer of the recent New York state merger between the Association and Federation, Shanker is sure of support. And since all members of the merged New York state union pay dues to the AFT, New York state delegates were practically 50% of the entire convention.

If that wasn't enough, there was the Progressive Caucus. This is a group with the AFT that debates policies, takes stands and requires its members to vote as a bloc on important questions. Nearly all the large locals belong to it. The Progressive Caucus is the the AFT convention, and, of course, the Progressive Caucus is dominated by Albert Shanker.

AFT-NEA Merger Debate

Merger talks between the 400,000 strong AFT (AFL-CIO) and its larger million and a half rival, the NEA, are set to begin this month. The Shanker position is that the AFT executive council should be given complete authority to negotiate a merger without any convention-imposed requirements or restrictions. The majority of the New York state delegates backed this position to the hilt. So did most major locals.

Opponents of this "trust the executive council" philosophy ranged from those who thought merger was premature to those who approved of merger but wanted to place restrictions on AFT negotiators.

Somewhere in the middle of the opposition was the Connecticut delegation. Ronald O'Brien, State President, tried to get the convention to make AFL-CIO affiliation a necessary part of any new merged organization. He argued that it had to be made clear to the NEA that to join with the AFT ought to result in the new organization becoming a real part of the Amer-American labor movement.

But the delegates rejected this too. All efforts to set pre-conditions to merger or to establish an initial bargaining position for negotiations were simply overwhelmed.

Hanging high over the podium in the main meeting hall was the slogan: "Elect a Veto Proof Congress." I suppose that was the theme of the convention. Elect enough friendly congressmen so Nixon's vetos of educational bills can be overridden.

Anti-Nixon

Al Barkan, Director of the AFL-CIO Committee of Political Education was a featured speaker. He delivered a rip-roaring attack on the Nixon administration, filled with biting jibes and sarcastic comments. The audience ate it up, interrupting his speeck again and again with applause.

But where was Al Barkan in '72? Where was he when Nixon ran for re-elction against McGovern? Why, he was a neutral of course, because that's what George Meany told him to be. If Meany had stood with McGovern last year, we might not have to be talking about a "veto proof" Congress.

Political Action Stressed

The AFT strategy for the future seems to be heavily tied to national politiking. But what kind of politics will it be? Probably the AFL-CIO variety: "Vote for all the Democrats unless they're for the New Politics." Do teachers seriously believe that voting for the Democrats is going to solve the 10% teacher unemployment rate or increase the miserable wage hikes they have been getting? And what ever happened to the traditional trade union tools: job actions, demonstrations, strikes? There was scarcely a word about these measures at the Washington convention.

Putting the main emphasis on elections is putting the cart before the horse. Teachers don't have enough votes or money to hand pick a Congress. And the American public isn't going to agree to defense cuts and more money for the schools until militant demands from below force it to act.

Have A Salad Union Style

SPINACH SALAD

1 package (10 oz.) spinach, washed well
1 medium Bermuda or Spanish onion, diced
1 hard-boiled egg, coarsely chopped
salt & pepper to taste

Tear spinach leaves into small pieces. Add onions and eggs. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add dressing to taste. Toss gently. Serves 4.

GREEN BEAN SALAD

2 lbs. green beans (cooked)
1 can (4 oz.) mushrooms, drained
1 pimento, chopped
1 bunch scallions, chopped (without leaves)
1 can (4 oz.) black olives, drained and chopped
French dressing to taste.

Combine and lightly mix all ingredients. Refrigerate overnight. Serves 6.

Editorial

Organize! Organize! Organize!

We are in a new political season. The bombing in Southeast Asia has been halted; the first phase of the Watergate investigations is over; a general disbelief in this administration's ability to exercise control over the economy obtains; and a wholesale loss of faith in the justice of the processes of government is now commonplace. And yet nothing is stirring. There is no national drive to impeach Nixon, or to force his resignation; there are no mass demonstrations demanding that the country's pressing problems (unemployment, inflation, bad housing, inadequate health care, decaying cities, etc.) be attended to.

Perhaps it is that no one expects any changes of substance to come out of the current debacle (Nixon is after all still in office), and that therefore there is not much point in belaboring the obvious. Perhaps it is that everyone believes that the only thing that is really going on is that the established politicians are using the issue of corruption to promote their own brand of corruption (Weicker, for example, who sees no dishonesty in American militarism, or in unlimited corporate profits, is suddenly blue-faced over officially sponsored burglary).

People are cynical, and with good reason. They're tired of reacting, they're tired of protesting against the excesses of a system that they know to be beyond self-correction. Ten years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. stood up in Washington and shouted for all to hear that he had a dream. There was hope then, there was hope that the dream could be realized, that America would respond. But with the understanding that has come from that ten years, people are now beginning to sense that we must either completely give up or accept the challenge to build, painstakingly, a grass-roots base of political opposition, to brace ourselves for the opportunities that surely await us. The question is, are we ready?

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MODERN TIMES

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MODERN TIMES is published by the American Independent Movement (AIM) as its political organ. Work on MODERN TIMES is done by volunteers, both members and non-members of AIM. The political views of AIM are given in the editorial. We encourage contributions from the New Haven community in the form of articles and letters.

MODERN TIMES is a paper to tell the story of and by the people of New Haven. We don't get this kind of news from profit-making commercial papers. There is no place else in New Haven where the problems of working men and women are told by them instead of their bosses. There is no place else where the problems of employment and education, and housing and health care are told by the people who have to live with them.

This is the richest country in the world. Yet most of the wealth is used only by a few. We must all work together to claim the wealth we all helped to create. There would be no need to strike for paltry raises, waste our resources and labor on missiles and bombs, or waste the lives of our young men in wars like Vietnam. We would produce what we need, not what is profitable.

The American Independent Movement has been working since 1966 to get people together against the vested interests that run New Haven and the whole country. We want everyone to have good housing, good education, child care centers, recreation areas, decent health care, and decent jobs.

STAFF: David Adams, Gary Benenson, Matt Borenstein, Ed Brueler, Ellen Comisso, Vittorio Comisso, Lillian Dimow, Joelle Dominski, Andy Esposito, John Flannelly, Harriet Fraad, Sam Goodwin, Stanley Heller, Liz Henderson, Nick Heyer, Eileen Hoffman, Lynne Karsten, Karl Lechow, Alice Mick, Steve Mick, Ray Milici, Patti Miller, Laurie Nussdorfer, Renee Poirier, Peter O'Connell, Naomi Resnick, Ruth Resnick, Pat Sandacata, Bob Sherry, Dave Spinner, Henry Tamarin, Rick Wolff, Karen Wolff.

Reading, Writing & Politics

by Ruth Hein

Question: What is the purpose of public education in New Haven?

Answer: To provide jobs paying $20,000-plus a year for faithful political hacks. And if you thought it was anything else, you can forget it. Especially now that Superintendent of Schools George Barbarito has put in his first year's list of appointments.

This list was not revealed to the Board of Education until August 27--ten days before the opening of school. Nor would Barbarito discuss specific points; it was, in his words, 'all or nothing.' His heralded 'reorganization' involves the following:

Three jobs (paying up to $25,000 apiece) that are either new or were supposed to be eliminated. Only three jobs (out of more than 20) to Blacks, and not one of them in a policy-making position. No Spanish-Americans at all. A number of high-paying, policy-making positions to people clearly lacking in ability or experience. (Not that everyone within the system is incompetent or venal. But somehow the creative, bright people get so far and no further--unless, of course, they leave New Haven altogether).

Educational Musical Chairs

To give these plums to the 'right' people requires a widespread game of musical

see BOARD, page 6

Matt Borenstein

Ernest Cassell, director of personnel for the Board of Education, sits dejectedly during signing of teachers' contract last May.

Ten Years of News and Struggle

TV REVIEW

by Matt Borenstein
Modern Times Staff

On September 1, CBS re-broadcast their first all network news program as a ten-year anniversary. The first CBS network news with Walter Cronkite was seen nationwide on September 1, 1963.

The half-hour news program of ten years ago covered a wide range of topics as they do today. Some of the characters were the same: Walter Cronkite with the same voice but thinner with dark hair; George Wallace was fighting integration in the south; and correspondents were the same as in present broadcasts, but were younger and thinner and were reporting from different locations.

Same Issues Still With Us

Nevertheless, the main issues of the day -- September 1, 1963 -- were remarkably similar to the main issues of September 1, 1973: civil rights, unemployment, the economy, and Vietnam.

On September 1, 1963, Governor George Wallace of Alabama had put off the opening of schools by one week to seek ways of avoiding a Federal desegregation order. Alabama State Police were guarding the schools.

Walter Cronkite, in an informal interview with President John Kennedy, asked how the Federal government would deal with civil rights. Kennedy explained that equality of education was the key to equality of opportunity. If everyone had equal abilities and backgrounds, job discrimination could be minimized.

Cronkite also asked Kennedy whether a vigorous pursuit of civil rights would hurt his chances for reelection in 1964 -- especially in the South. President Kennedy cleverly evaded the question.

Vietnam Justified

On Vietnam, Cronkite asked whether our commitment to the small Southeast Asian country was well justified. Kennedy replied that the Vietnamese must defeat the Communists by themselves. The U.S. would supply all necessary assistance in the form of advisors and weapons.

Kennedy also expressed disapproval of the internal, repressive policies of the Diem government -- particularly the repression of the Buddhists. Kennedy claimed that the Diem government in Vietnam in 1963 was not pursuing the correct course for victory against the Communists but that the United States had a continued interest and responsibility in Vietnam.

The news broadcast of 1963 then flashed to the streets of Saigon. Henry Cabot Lodge, the newly appointed ambassador to Vietnam, was taking a stroll with his wife. Shops were filled with food and cleanly dressed Vietnamese children watched cautiously as the Americans strolled by. It is likely that five years later those children were in the midst of the battles or killed by napalm.

Unemployment a Problem

Back to the interview with President Kennedy. The question for Labor Day: *what will the Federal government do* about the high unemployment of 5%? Kennedy explained that the key to the unemployment problem was a tax cut pending before Congress. If more money is put into the hands of consumers through a tax cut, he claimed, demand would stimulate production and create jobs.

The news broadcast of September 1, 1963 could have been repeated on September 1, 1973, with a different President and without Watergate.

Write On

To the Editor:

Dear Writer of the Horse Meat article (Sept. 1-15):

First of all, what is your name? It's not like *Modern Times* to make sport of some of their readers. Secondly, where is your reverence for life and your own real love for creatures, each one beautiful in itself and each one with as much right to the good life as you and I. We who are creatures too! Thirdly, *Modern Times* is not underwriting the beef corporations, holding up for the right price the sad creatures grown to be eaten—like the fine editorial in last week's paper said—no, *Modern Times* stands for something better—soybeans for example, as fine a source of protein as living flesh.

Will you please Mr. (?) look into:

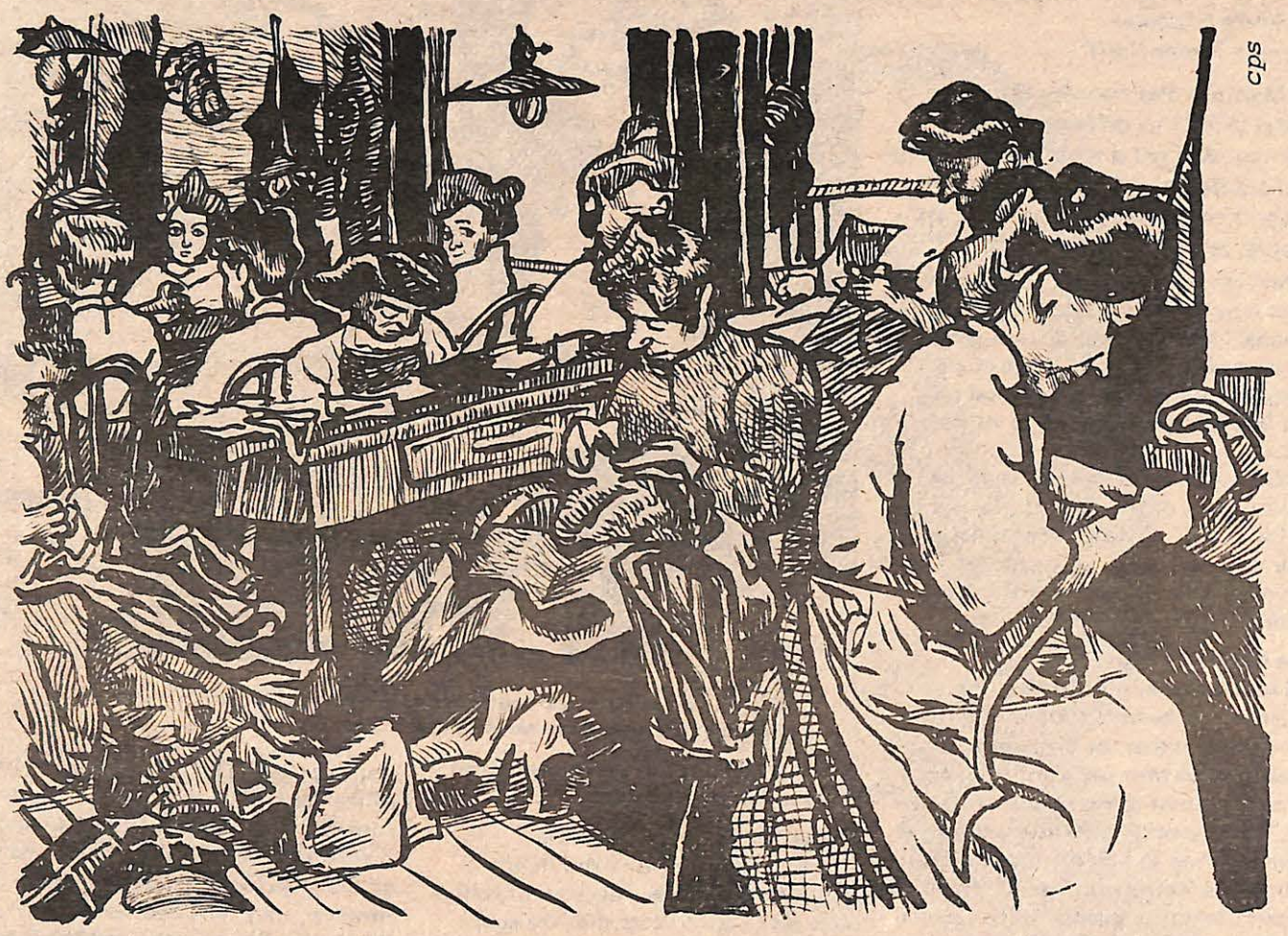
1. Where in New Haven can we buy soybeans.
2. And where can we find recipes for their serving—

This in not written to hurt you, but to help us all.

F. Whitney (Mt. Carmel)

The Great Uprising of the Twenty Thousand

by Community Press Service (Boston)



The strike by garment workers against Farah Slacks is now more than a year old. The workers, 85% of whom are women and most of whom are Chicano, are trying to unionize to protect themselves against Farah's low wages and oppressive working conditions. Farah's main plant is located in El Paso, Texas, with a string of other plants throughout the Southwest.

Farah pays an average wage of $1.80 an hour; talking at work is forbidden; pro-union workers are harassed and summarily fired, and hundreds of picketers have been arrested and attacked by unmuzzled dogs. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union has called for a nationwide boycott of Farah slacks.

The situation in this strike is reminiscent of this nation's first major garment industry strike—fought and won almost entirely by women under the age of 25.

Called "The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand," the strike began in New York City on November 22nd, 1909 and lasted almost three months. The strikers, workers in the shirtwaist (blouse) trade, were 80% women, 70% of whom were between the ages of 16 and 25.

Even Their Chairs Were Taxed

Shirtwaist workers labored 12 hours a day, six days a week. They were forced to buy their needles and supplies from employers who made a 20% profit on each sale. If a worker accidently spoiled a piece of cloth she was charged three or four times its value. They had to pay rent for their hat-and-coat lockers; even their chairs were taxed by employers. All this came out of wages that ranged from three-to-twelve dollars a week.

On the eve of the strike the only functioning local union, No. 25 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), had 100 members and four dollars in the treasury.

In early November, 1909, several small strikes had proven successful, giving rise to expectations among the workers that a general strike was in order. Union officials of the ILGWU and the United Hebrew Trades urged caution. One such leader, John Dyche, cautioned his "fellow" leaders to "take it easy, do not rush; things do not move so fast. The workers have to be organized slowly."

A Wisp Of A Girl

But Local 25 was gaining members fast and general strike was on everybody's lips.

On the night of November 22nd, there was a mass meeting in New York's Cooper Union. "For two hours," wrote one eyewitness, "the attentive audience was cautioned to use due deliberation, to be sober in their decision..."

Suddenly, Clara Lemlich, "a wisp of a girl, still in her teens," rose and asked to speak. Clara was known in the trades as something of a firebrand and there was fear she might upset the orderly course of the meeting. But the man chairing the meeting was a strict parliamentarian and felt compelled to recognize her.

Once on the platform, Clara did not waste words: "I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether we shall or shall not strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared *now!*"

The crowd roared to its feet shouting approval; for almost five minutes the throng waved hats, canes, handerchiefs, anything they could get their hands on. Finally, the tumult died down just long enough for the chairman to ask for someone to second the motion. The big audience leapt to its feet again to second the motion en masse.

"May This Hand Wither"

The chairman was carried along by this wave of sentiment. He faced the workers, of whom 65% were Jewish and cried: "Do you mean it in absolute faith? Will you take the old Jewish oath?" All the gathered raised one hand in prayer: "If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge," they recited in unison, "may this hand wither from the arm I now raise!"

In a few days, 15,000 of the city's 30,000 shirtwaist workers walked off the job (eventually, a total of 20,000 were on strike).

The employers, according to labor historian Melech Epstein, were "taken aback by the audacity of their girls." They threw all the elements of their "physical reasoning" against the strikers: hired thugs, private detectives, prostitutes, police and magistrates.

One magistrate, a man named Olmstead, in sentencing a picket, shouted: "You are on strike against God and Nature, whose law is that man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. You are on strike against God! The Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, informed of this outburst, said: "Delightful, Medieval America always in the intimate personal confidence of the Almighty."

Even though the previously cautious male leadership of the union had now thrown its complete support behind the strike, it was the young women workers who cintinued to lead it. Esther Lobetkin hardly ate or slept during the strike. Arrested time and again, she would shout from the patrol wagon, "Do not lose courage. We will win yet!"

Highly Significant Revelation

Bessie Switski and her sister were assigned to picket outside a shop where thugs and police were so brutal that none of the other young women would go. According to Epstein, "the two sisters fought the thugs daily until the employer decided to negotiate with the union."

The strike was settled on February 15th 1910. The shirtwaist manufacturers' association refused to recognize the union but 339 of its 353 member firms signed contracts with it!

The workers won a 52 hour week; four legal holidays with full pay; the right to negotiate wages at the start of each season; abolition of the practice of paying for supplies; and, finally, no reprisals against those who struck.

In the three months the strike had lasted, Local 25 of ILGWU had grown from 100 members to 10,000.

"This strike," wrote Epstein, *established conclusively that women were not inferior to men in courage, stamia and organization. To industries employing a large proportion of women, the revelation was highly significant."*

The women's success was also significant to the men at the head of the ILGWU. The leaders' overcautiousness of the past was replaced by a new militancy. Their next strike, known as the "Great Upheaval," involved 50,000 workers in the cloak and suit-making trades. Three more great strikes followed, including the general strike of men's clothing workers in New York (1913-14).

All these strikes—the direct result of the women's vanguard action in the shirtwaist strike—paved the way for nationwide efforts to unionize the garment industry.

Maternity Rights for Teachers Upheld

by Matt Borenstein
Modern Times Staff

The Connecticut Human Rights Commission has ruled that the period of disability during pregnancy for a teacher cannot be arbitrarily established by a Board of Education or by discriminatory contract language.

The Connecticut State Federation of Teachers claims that the New Haven plan should be further modified to give sick pay for maternity in order to meet provisions of the federal law.

The case involved two Bristol teachers, Nancy Hall and Bonnie Ferranti. The Connecticut State Federation of Teachers (CSFT) and the Bristol Federation of Teachers supported the case of the two teachers who had been forced to take maternity leave. The Human Rights Commission held that a teacher who wishes to work can insist that her maternity leave be no longer than the period her doctor says she is actually physically incapable of working.

CSFT Position

The CSFT has urged all teacher union locals in Connecticut (American Federation of Teachers) to get Boards of Education to put maternity leave policies in compliance with law. Many cities force teachers to take maternity leave at the sixth month of pregnancy or earlier even though the woman is physically capable and willing to work.

The CSFT has also asked for the names of teachers who have been adversely affected by discriminatory Board of Education contract language relating to pregnancy. The CSFT intends, through their attorneys, to "right any injustices that may have resulted through such discrimination."

The New Haven Federation of Teachers gained a non-discriminatory maternity leave policy in their new contract last year. The issue still to be resolved is whether teachers can use paid accumulated sick leave for maternity leave. The AFT claims that the non-discrimination provisions of Federal laws should allow the use of contractual sick leave for maternity.

NH Student Prepares for China Trip

by Andy Esposito
Modern Times Staff

Mention the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) to different people and you will get a wide variety of responses depending on their preconceived images of that vast land, its people, and its government.

And yet, very little is actually known about it by westerners who are not professional China scholars. This situation will soon be changing as a group of US college students, among them local resident Mindy Novick, prepare to visit the PRC.

Ms. Novick participated in an introductory phase of the planned trip over the Labor Day weekend, when she and other members of the US delegation met with nine students from the PRC in their embassy in Ottawa, Canada.

Have Goals Firmly in Mind

The most striking difference between the American students and their Chinese counterparts is that the Chinese students appear to have their goals firmly in mind. "More than most foreign students I have met," said Novick, "they have a strong desire to return to China, which they refer to as the Motherland, and help build a better life for her people." The Chinese intense desire to return home and apply newly learned skills for the betterment of their society is not surprising since, unlike US students, they must work on a farm or in a factory for three years after secondary school before they can apply for a college education (which is paid for by the government). Therefore, they strongly identify with the working people of their Motherland.

How Students Are Selected

The first criteria that prospective college students are required to meet is that they must be good workers. The decision of who is a "good worker" is made by a group composed of supervisors and peer group members in the work place, be it factory or farming commune.

The next step in the selection process is a series of examinations to determine the field of study for which an individual is best suited. After the examination process is completed, a student is sent to one of the PRC's many foreign language institutes for three years of intensive study. Upon completion of the foreign language study program, the students are assigned to groups which are sent to study in foreign countries.

Mindy Novick

An Antioch professor and two American students exchange views with a visiting Chinese student on China and America.

Process Yields Mature Students

This process, of work and foreign language study, delays the start of college some six to seven years after the completion of secondary school and thus, yields students who are more mature and sophisticated than their western counterparts.

In her conversations with the Chinese students, Novick found out that the educational process in China is not limited to students, but also includes workers. The workers at a factory or commune regularly hold political discussions.

As a result, the Chinese worker would appear to be more politically aware than his western counterpart. "To the best of my knowledge," Novick stated, "no similar worker's discussion groups, to upgrade workers' political awareness, exists in this country."

Difficulties Understanding US Systems

This political awareness on the part of the Chinese doesn't extend to foreign lands. "It was apparent from our conversations," said Novick, "that although the Chinese had a basic knowledge of the US industrial and class systems, they did not as yet understand some of their more subtle aspects. For example, they assumed all blacks were members of the poor or working class. They didn't realize that all members of an ethnic minority are not necessarily members of the working class. Also, they have a limited understanding of how the US governmental system works. However, they were anxious to learn all they could about the US and asked many perceptive questions.

Myths Shattered

The interaction with the Chinese students provided a vivid example of just how inaccurate stereotypes can be. The common image of a group of Chinese students in the US would be one of sameness. This is definitely not the case.

Novick says: "Although they dress very simply and uniformly by western standards, the Chinese I met were very much their own person. Each had his/her own way to approach a problem. Also the students I spent time with didn't feel they had any less freedom than we do. The Chinese students want to accept what their government wants them to do for the future of China."

"There are still many aspects of Chinese culture and life I want to explore. This visit to Canada was an interesting 'coming attraction' of the 'main feature', a three month visit to the PRC, later this year."

Cafe Workers Postpone Strike

Modern Times Staff

East Haven's cafeteria workers union announced on August 31 that a new contract offer from the Board of Education has led the union to postpone a strike authorized last week by the school cafeteria workers.

John W. Wilhelm, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 217, Hotel & Restaurant Employees Union, AFL-CIO, said that "all cafeteria workers are scheduled to report fo work on September 5 because the Board of Education's latest offer gives us some hope that a reasonable settlement can be reached without strike action."

Board More Responsive

The Board's latest offer was described by Wilhelm as a "much improved response to the workers' concerns in the areas of manpower and hours of work and also wages."

The Union leader emphasized that "a settlement has not been reached, and the Negotiating Committee is still authorized to call a strike if necessary. However, this new offer by the Board at least provides a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. My personal feeling is that it will provide at least the basis for a fair settlement on the hours of work and wages questions. A contract settlement will still require some serious negotiating, since there are still a number of very important open issues in other areas."

Board

continued from page 4

chairs: assistant principals to principalships, principals from one school to another-generally to no good purpose. The shuffle is particularly elaborate because, since some schools are considered more prestigious than others, it can be used to reward the good soldiers and shaft the 'undesirables'. As a result, one elementary school is faced with the fourth principal in four years. Could you be an effective teacher in that school? Do you want your kid to go there?

Contract Violation

Nor were these positions adequately publicized. The SAA contract (for the supervisors' and administrators' association) requires 15 days posting and open applications. Instead, the appointments were made so unilaterally that at least one person who was moved from one school to another knew nothing about it, I've heard, until his name was given to the Board.

Of course the SAA protested. At a long executive meeting on Sept. 6 the Board still withheld approval, insisting that additional applicants be considered. This move postpones but does not rule out eventual adoption of the original list.

Whether Barbarito will continue to insist on 'all or nothing' approval, or whether there will be some delicate horse trading remains to be seen. In the meantime the schools have opened in an atmosphere of uneasiness. Administrators who are back at their old jobs have no way of knowing whether they will be reassigned shortly, people eager to take up their new duties are cooling their heels, and the community does not know what is going to happen.

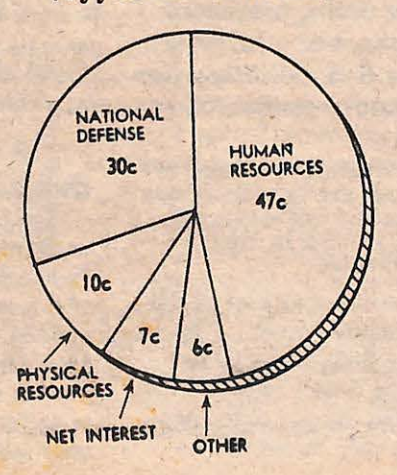
The Board of Education vs. George Barbarito

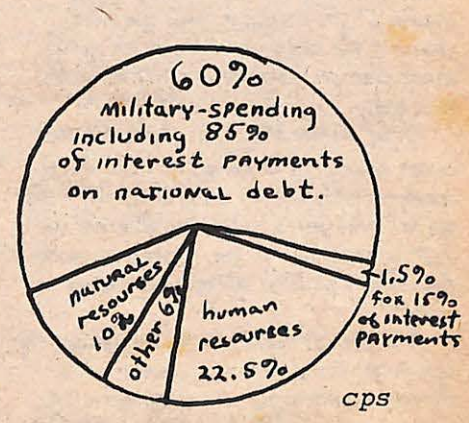
The Board's responses to these proposals are interesting. As I piece it together, there was great goodwill toward Barbarito when he was acting superintendent. But his refusal to give the Board earlier notice of his plans, his insistence on having it all his way, the questions raised by some of the appointments, all have conspired to make the Board wary. It must have come as a surprise at the August 27 meeting when the Board withheld approval of the recommendations. And, in New Haven's political climate, the rejection of Andrew Nastri as school architect was clearly an act of courageous defiance. (Nastri, who resigned from the Board recently to apply for the post, was generally considered unqualified, nevertheless, Barbarito, possible acting for the Mayor or Barbieri, made a formal reccommendation to the Board to hire Nastri).

There are on the Board some sensible, well-intentioned people. But all of them are mayoral appointees, and some of them must feel that any major defection from administration policy can have serious political and economic consequence on their lives. Think about it.

There's no happy ending to this story, no uplift message, no inspiring moral. I'm angry and I'm depressed. Year after brutal year, concerned teachers and parents contribute their time, energies, ideas, and all that happens is that things get worse. And the last consideration at 200 Orange Street is the rights of the children to humane treatment and decent schooling.

PENTAGON EATS 3/5 OF PIE





Labor Notes

SHUSTER-METTLER WORKERS CONTINUE STRIKE

Members of Local 609 employed at Shuster-Mettler Corporation on the Boulevard, New Haven, have been out on strike since July 16, 1973. There has been only one meeting with the company since then. If you are in the area, stop on the line and give your support. The pickets are on duty from 7:15 AM to 5:00 PM. Lend them support in their quest for better working conditions and benefits.

NIXON DEALS ANOTHER BLOW TO LABOR

A new HEW regulation gives the states the right to throw working people and their families to the wolves during a strike. States can now refuse food stamp and welfare benefits to striking workers. It's a clear case of how the Nixon Administration washes its hands of responsibility for workers. This is the famous Alternative A many people wrote HEW to protest - and it's now an official regulation. Since the first of the year, some 6000 letters have come to HEW from churches, social organizations, unions, and others protesting this throwback to the days of the rack and wheel. But to no avail.

BANKER CALLS ANTI-LOAN SHARKING LAWS 'MEDIEVAL'

In several states, bankers and other lending institutions are lobbying to have the ceiling on interest rates lifted. Oliver Jones, executive vice president of the Mortgage Bankers Association says that such ceilings are "medieval." He has strong opposition from critics who demonstrate that mortgage lending is running at a faster pace than a year ago. In New Jersey, AFL-CIO officials are demanding a rollback of permissible interest to 6%, contending this would allow working people to afford housing.

PENN CENTRAL PLAYS GAMES WITH PEOPLE'S SAFETY

The Penn Central Railroad has asked the Federal Railroad Administration to exempt its track system from new national track safety standards which are to go into effect on October 16. One agency official asserted that the Penn Central's request was part of a "poker game being played by the trustees" of the rail line to win massive Federal aid. The trustees have stated that unless they receive help from Washington , they will cease operations this winter.

Number Nine Conference Planned

"Youth oppression and how to organise for change" will be the focus of a high school educational conference to be held on Saturday, September 29, 1973.

Workshops will deal with specific youth issues. Sharing information, discussions, brainstorming, consciousness and energy raising will be directed in areas such as a development of a high school student union and changing specific oppressive laws.

Saturday's events will take place at the Number 9 storefront, 266 State Street, from 10 am to 6 pm. A dance will follow in the evening. Sunday's plans include a less-structured day in a less-city setting. Housing, food and transportation will be provided.

The Conference is free and open to all high school students and interested adults. Number 9, the South Central Connecticut Youth Council and others are sponsoring the Conference. More information is available at 787-2120.

Local 217

continued from page 1

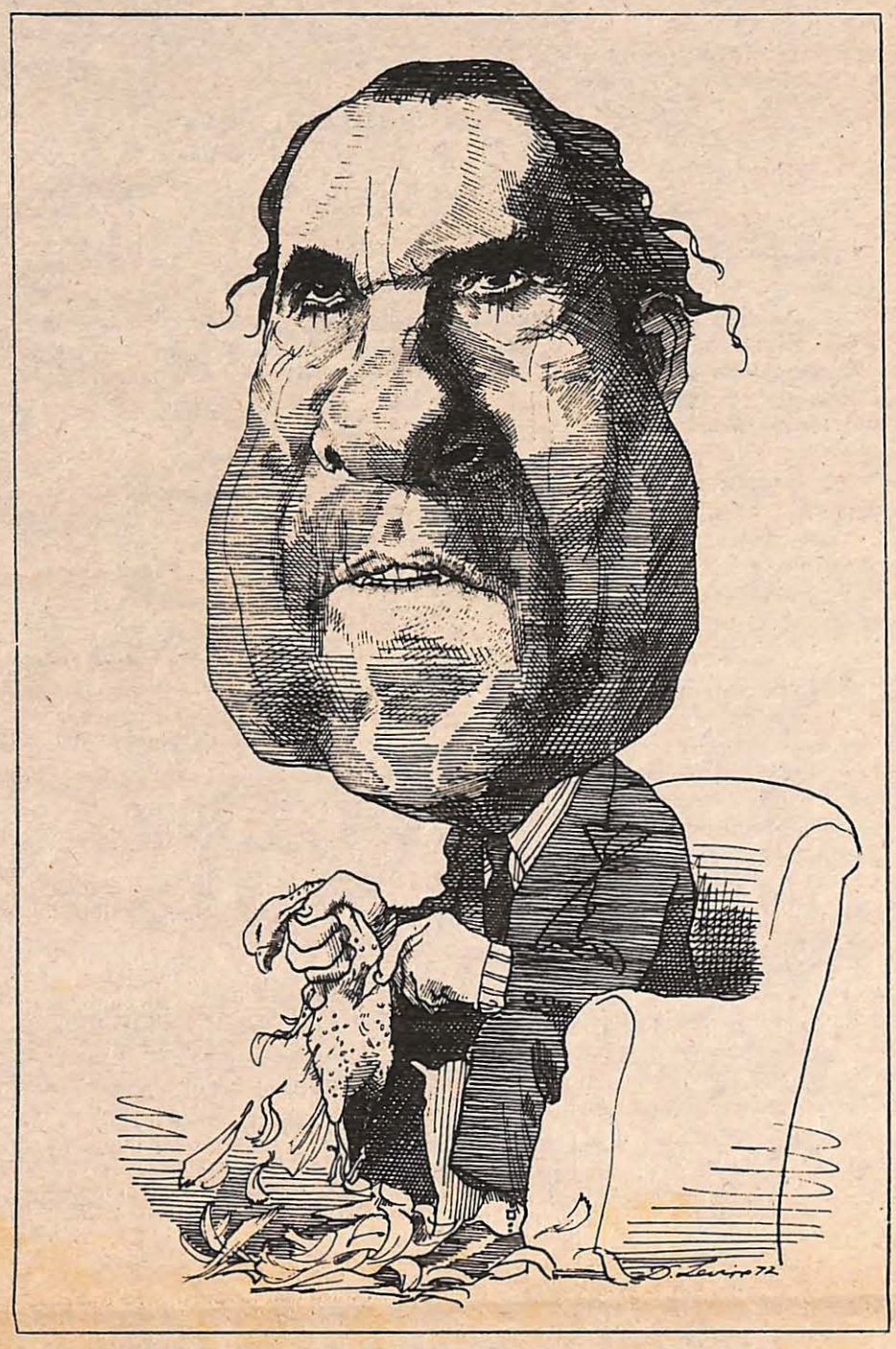
will learn that the workers won't be exploited any more."

Local 217 has about 1,200 members, working in hotels, motels, plant cafeterias, school cafeterias, caterers, and a wide variety of other service jobs.

Local 35, Federation of University Employees, which represents 1,300 workers at Yale, is also affiliated with the Hotel & Restaurant Employees & Bartenders International Union. Local 59 in Hartford is the Union's other Connecticut affiliate with about 500 members in the greater Hartford area.

Workers interested in the Union can contact Local 217 at 787-2019 for further information, or write to the Union at 45 Water Street, New Haven, Conn. 065ll.

The King and the Dragon



AFT (Hayward, Ohio)

Once the King of Haven met a dragon on the road. "You seem troubled," said the Dragon. "I am," replied the King. "My 30,000 chickens need experts to tend them and there are no experts to be found." "I will find you experts, if you pay my fee," said the Dragon. "Done," said the King.

Soon there was a happy, well-fed expert for every 30 chickens. All went well for some time and then suddenly the Dragon appeared before the King. "I want my pay," he said. "How much?" asked the King. "All the food you give to each experts." The King looked at his experts. 'They can probably do without,' he thought. "Done," he said. Soon the experts and their children were starving. The experts came to the Dragon. "Why are you starving us?" they asked. "You're expendable and I'm expensive, " the Dragon said.

The Palace of Bread

"I have 200 heads, all hungry. And my new palace alone cost 2 million loaves of bread." "We can't work if we starve," the experts said. "If we die, the chickens will run wild and the King will fire you." "Ha ha!" laughed the Dragon. "That shows what you know. Still, we will meet and confer about your food. Be at my palace this afternoon." When everyone was seated, two puppets appeared on stage. "We want more food," said one puppet. "There is no food to spare," said the other puppet.

Both voices sounded like the Dragon. It went on for 200 days. Then the experts came stumbling and pale to the King. "The Meet-and-Confer is a farce. Give us our food," they said. "Oh dear," said the King. "Here, take two loaves of bread." "It is an insult," the experts said. "Be fair." The King said, "I will have wise men find out the facts. Come to my palace this afternoon." When everyone was seated, two puppets appeared on stage. "Where are the facts?" said one. "There are no facts to spare," said the other. "This is a farce, too," the experts said. But it lasted 200 more days. After the 200 more days, the King announced, "The Fact-Finders say 'Meet and confer again.' 200 more days."

But the courtyard was empty. The Dragon had starved the experts and eaten the chickens. Then he ate the King.

Boycott Farah Slacks and Non-UFW Grapes & Lettuce

On The Job

Employment Merry-Go-Round

Modern Times Staff

This is the story of a man's getting into trouble with one of the biggest corporations in the world, and getting out again—twice.

Since September 5, 1972, the person in question, I'll call him John for his own protection, has been back on his old job as a yardmaster in Penn Central's Cedar Hill freight terminal. He had been gone for mos. of 31 months—fired and reinstated—twice.

A yardmaster's job is to supervise all the switching engines working within a defined area of tracks (a yard) and any freight-trains coming into or going out of the yard. There may be anywhere up to eight engines, each with a crew of three or four men, making up freight-trains or putting cars into industrial sidings. The idea is to keep moving the cars nearer their destination, move the most important ones first, and avoid collisions.

Twenty-five Years of Experience

In any case, John hired out on the New Haven Railroad in 1946 as a laborer. After working at several jobs he was rostered as a yardmaster in 1962.

He soon got a reputation as one of the most competent yardmasters (everybody's work is easier and safer when the yardmaster knows what he's doing). When the New Haven was absorbed into the Penn Central system (Dec. 31, 1968) he became a "protected employee." This meant that Penn Central had to guarantee him a chance to work as many days each month as he had worked in an average month in 1967, and it was obliged to guarantee this security until he retired or died—or until they could find an excuse to fire him.

One of Penn Central's most notorious gimmicks for tripping up its yardmasters is the "nine-ninety." Every yardmaster is told to report a certain number of safety-*rule violations per month on Form 990.* Since Form 990 is printed so as to serve for reporting both violations and compliances, most yardmasters fill their quota of "nine-nineties" with reports of observed compliances—"favorable nine-nineties."

The Start of His Trouble

One day John signed the form where it says, "I certify time claimed (working time of a fellow employee) correct." A standard practice. Yardmasters often sign these claims without reading them. Even when a time-claim is found to be in error or controversial, no yardmaster is ever disciplined for signing it. But Penn Central found some thing wrong with this one, unbeknownst to John, and simply sent a letter telling him that he was fired.

Now we enter a jungle of technicalities. Another man, a subordinate whose incorrect information on the time-claim had been responsible for John's mistake, had been quietly told to submit a corrected time-claim. Penn Central did not produce it in its "investigation" and so did not really acknowledge getting it. Penn Central finally fired this man for submitting the first time-claim—either fraudently or in error.

No Faith in the Union

The second man apparently had no faith in the union and conducted his own defense. Fired after the "investigation," he gave up an attempt to be reinstated and got another job. John also had little faith in the union – at least in its ability to affect the results of the company's "investigation," but he resolved to use every means to get his job back, and the necessary first step was to bring his union representative to the hearing. He decided to bring a lawyer as well. The lawyer listened and prepared to take the case to court. That was in Jan., 1970.

The minutes of the "investigation" and letters from the lawyer reached succeddingly higher levels of the Penn Central management. After much negotiating, John was *allowed to go back to work in Nov., 1970.*

Dave Spinner

Yardmen take a midday break from their work on the Penn Central.

The matter of his pay for the ten months out of service was left to be decided later—in the courts or by further negotiation.

While off the railroad he had tended a bar at nights and had driven a truck for a paving company during the day. Just before coming back to his railroad job he was beaten up and robbed while taking the cash from the bar to the bank after closing. So he cam back to work with his jaw wired up—talking and giving orders without moving his mouth. Then after working a few days he got laryngitis. Because he couldn't talk, he couldn't very well perform his duties as a yardmaster, so he retained his truck-driving job and claimed sick leave from Penn Central. Before he was sufficiently recovered, however, he received another letter informing him that he was once again fired. So he engaged a lawyer and started the long road of appeals and negotiations all over again.

Reinstated for a Second Time

Finally in Aug., 1972 John and Penn Central came to a settlement out of court. He is back on the job, and working on the same terms as the other yardmasters—not hassled with the unique quota of "nine-nineties."

And lately the Penn Central management seems to be less concerned with harassment, intimidation and buck-passing and more concerned with the business of moving loads and empties. How much John's long, stubborn fight to keep his job, his pay, and his reputation helped to make it that way no one can really tell—it certainly didn't hurt however.

Classified

Cooperative child care center seeking a person interested and experienced in coordinating program for young children and joining in collective work in day care politics. Long hours, subsistence pay, high reward. Contact: State Street Child Care Center c/o 50 Troiano Road, Hamden, Conn. 776-9572.

New Theatre Group looking for Directors, Technical Directors and Designers. Call 865-3555 or 776-9593 for an interview.

There will be a film showing and discussion with a local obstetrician of the Lamase Method of Childbirth on Thurs., Sept. 20 at 7:30 in the auditorium of the Conn. Medical Health Center, 34 Park St. New Haven. Call 787-5362 for information.

The staff of *Modern Times* mourns the death of Salvador Allende, who headed Chile's constitutionally legitimate government which was viciously overthrown by a rightist-supported military coup on September the eleventh.

Part of a fresco by Diego Rivera

There's Too Much Going On Not To Know About

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